# GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
# EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
# LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:5707
ANSWERED ON:16.05.2007
MAHATMA GANDHI`S PICTURE IN A CREDIT CARD
Chaure Shri Bapu Hari;Dhotre Shri Sanjay Shamrao;Gawali Smt. Bhavana Pundlikrao

**Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:**

(a) whether the picture of Mahatma Gandhi with lip movements has been depicted in an advertisement campaign for a credit card of Richard Branson Group of Britain and his picture has also been used in that credit card;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have taken up the issue with the Richard Branson Group of Britain in this regard;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Group thereto;

(e) whether certain organisations of South Africa have termed it as an insult to `the Messiah of Peace` and protested against it; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

## Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE)

(a) to (d) A South Africa based company 'Virgin Money', part of Virgin Group established by Richard Branson of UK, had used the picture of Mahatma Gandhi for a TV advertisement in South Africa promoting its credit card. The advertisement was run in March 2007.

Our High Commission in London was asked to ascertain details from the Virgin Group in UK. They were informed that the advertisement had been withdrawn from the media stations following complaints.

(e) & (f) Some individuals in South Africa including Mr. R. Kallideen, Secretary, Phoenix Settlement Trust and Mr. Ram Maharaj, President, South African Hindu Dharma Sabha, have voiced their concern over the advertisement.